



Benson Parish Council

Benson Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

Full Council

Membership:

Councillor William Pattison (Chair), Councillor Patricia Baylis (Vice Chair), Councillor Robert Castelow-Sturges, Councillor David Dawkins, Councillor Rob Jordan, Councillor Fiona Lovesey, Councillor Gavin McLauchlan, Councillor Roger Moore, Councillor Phillip Murray, Councillor Ian Skeels, Councillor Tom Stevenson, Councillor Michael Winton.

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE PARISH HALL BENSON, ON TUESDAY 16th DECEMBER 2025 AT 7.30PM.

Present - Cllr W Pattison (Chair), Cllrs P Baylis, R Jordan, P Murray, F Lovesey, I Skeels, R Castelow-Sturges, R Moore and M Winton.

SODC Cllr S Cooper.

Clerk to Council - N Copland.

Nicola Copland
Parish Clerk
10th December 2025

1. Apologies and absences were noted from Cllrs G McLauchlan, D Dawkins and T Stevenson.

2. Declarations of interest

Members must ensure that they complete the Declaration of Interest sheet prior to the start of the meeting in respect of items other than Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and must indicate the action to be taken (i.e., to stay in the meeting, to leave the meeting or stay in the meeting to make representations and then leave the meeting prior to any considerations or determinations of the item). **None**

3. To receive written reports from the following:

- a. OCC Cllr G McLauchlan. Circulated
- b. SODC Cllrs S Cooper and A Powell. Cllr Cooper spoke to highlight areas of her report (see attached) particularly regarding the green spaces and drainage issues with the new developments and who will manage them moving forwards.

4. Public session

To allow members of the public to ask questions and address the Chair.

(It should be noted that the time allocated for the public session is a total of 10 minutes for all those wishing to speak as per council Standing Orders para 3.f.) **None present**

5. Minutes of the last meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting on the 27th November 2025 as a true record of the meeting.



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6. Exclusion of the Public to discuss an item.

Vote to resolve that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the business, the Press and Public be excluded from the items at the end of this meeting. **None**

7. Updates on previous actions.

EV chargers – C/F still waiting to hear from Rolec

Oxfordshire Together Digital map – received from GMcL

Speedwatch signs permission – yes needed but waiting to hear if we have it

Award nominations - comms in January

Flooded roundabout Hale Rd – C/F

Solar panels – Insurance company are asking numerous questions before they will quote.

Oak Tree on allotments – next R&L

Buy PC mobile phone – in progress

Review committee ToR – at next meeting of that committee

Committee budget use – review rules at next Finance meeting

8. Benson Parish Council Committees.

a. Finance and Staffing Committee

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Finance and Staffing Committee.

ii It was **RESOLVED** to set the precept for 2026/27 at £367,389. This represents a 62p per month increase for a band D property, a 4.85% increase.

iii It was **RESOLVED** that the 2026-27 budget is accepted as detailed on the document entitled Budget 2026-27 Final.

iv It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Pattison and Cllr Baylis are authorised to sign the Public Art Funding Agreement on behalf of Benson Parish Council.

v Full Council **NOTED** that £55,564.28 previously held in a Nationwide savings account has been moved to a CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

vi Full Council **NOTED** that Cllr Skeels has been voted onto the Finance Committee.

vii **Cuckoo Pen Project** - Full Council discussed and agreed that Benson PC should amend a previous resolution to appoint Landy Girls to carry out the Cuckoo Pen clearance project using CIL monies, without grant aid.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Landy Girls to clear the Cuckoo Pen area, for a sum of up to £35k +VAT, using CIL monies.

b Planning Committee

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Planning Committee.

The Orchard appeal is progressing.



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It was **RESOLVED** that Benson PC appoints a planning consultant to help councillors with The Orchard Planning Appeal/Hearing, (Land adjacent to The Orchard) Braze Lane Benson OX10 6JB, at a cost of no more than £8000+VAT.

c. Halls Committee

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Halls Committee.

No meeting since the last FC but there are a few updates as follows. New door instructions have been put around the building. A new regular user is starting at the Community Hall in January. Roofing and floor repairs will be carried out at the Parish Hall in January and electrical repairs as recommended in the 5 year electrical report will be carried out over the closed Christmas period.

ii Full Council **NOTED** that Cllr Jordan has stepped down as Chair of the Committee. Ian Skeels was nominated to take over this position as Chair.

d. Recreation and Lands Committee.

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Recreation and Lands Committee.

Nothing extra to report other than items already detailed in agenda.

e. Awards Committee.

i To receive a report from the Chair. – Nothing to report

9. Benson Parish Council Working Groups and Outside Bodies

a. Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Team

i. To receive a report from the Chair of the NPDT WG

Bewley have posted a major change notice against their s106 to address the significant drainage problems due to very high water table. They have presented a solution.

Following discussions with DWH we are now in a position to transfer Gerald Avenue and the eastern park. DWH will do a year of maintenance (to include grass cutting, hedge cutting and weed killing). Need to agree a final date and lodge with land registry.

b. Parish Events Working Group.

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Parish Events WG. **Action** - Arrange wash-up meeting for the 2 events.

c. Transport Representative

i. To receive a report from the Transport Representative - no update on mobile hub. New transport rep needed. **Action** – look for a new rep (ask Mick Brown if he has ideas or advertise on social media.)

d. Communications and Engagement Working Group.

i. To receive a report from the Chair of the Communications and Engagement WG. Good turnout for the Christmas lights event and the Facebook post following the event received most views over last few weeks. 30 new followers to BPC FB page. Despite briefing the Henley Standard, they didn't print anything in the paper. Next year will try and address



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this. Cllr Murray spoke about the forthcoming Orchard Appeal (17-20 February) to say that we should encourage parishioners to attend. Furthermore, if people would like to speak then they will need to submit their points in writing ahead. **Action** – Clerk to look up the procedure for the above. **ACTION**-Layla to advertise the process in January.

e. Public Art Fund Working group

i To receive a report and an update from the Chair of the Public Art Fund WG – Public Art agreement has been signed and will be sent off along with this meetings minutes authorising the signatories.

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f. CIL Working group.

i To receive a report from the Chair of the CIL WG – meeting focussed on the key chosen projects – Rivermead and the Pavilion. Cllr Cooper reminded BPC to apply for grant funding from SODC especially for projects which served outside areas in Benson e.g. Rivermead.

g. Road safety Working group.

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Road Safety WG - Speed watch arranged in January, the signs have arrived. Awaiting permission to put up. A one-day survey is going to be carried out to monitor heavy vehicles on the Oxford Road, particularly H&J although these will be rerouted onto the relief road once its open. They have a licence (recently renewed) which allows a certain number of lorries to pass through Benson and Ewelme. **Action** – Cllrs Moore and Murray to liaise. LC Whip consultation open and urge responses.

h. Rivermead Working Group.

To receive a report from the Chair of the Rivermead WG

10. Finance

- a. **It was resolved** to approve **and sign** the reconciled bank statements for the current account as of 30th November 2025.
- b. **It was resolved** to approve payments for December 2025.
- c. **Cllr Baylis** confirmed that a Councillor has checked and signed the monthly invoices.

11. Recommendation to Full Council-that Benson PC approves and accepts the transfer of the first 2 DWH Green Spaces (Gerard Avenue Triangle and Eastern Park along Watlington Rd).

12. Correspondence.

- a. To review correspondence received.



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1-SODC Deep Cleanse of the village-2-5 th March.	ACTION -Ground staff/Cllrs to identify problem areas.
2-SODC items-all covered in SODC newsletter	Circulated and attached to the minutes.
3-Comms from Barhale-works ahead of schedule should finish in March. Crown Lane will be open from 19 th December	Awaiting their official comms and then will circulate.
4-Consultation on Wallingford School admissions 2027-2028	Circulated on the website.

b. To review Parish Office Notes. The office will be closed from Tuesday 23rd December-Friday 2nd January.

13. Questions to the Chair.

Questions should be provided to the Parish Clerk by Monday 12 noon prior to the meeting. **None**

14. Items for Councillors to note. Cllr P Murray noted that the Preston Crowmarsh Conservation Area Appraisal decision is hoping to be approved at a meeting on 18th December. Cllr R Moore spoke about Saturday's (13th) councillor surgery to say that people appreciated the opportunity to speak to councillors and that it was worthwhile doing it. Moving forwards these will be held bi-annually. Chair B Pattison queried when the DWH sign will be removed from the entrance wall to their development. **ACTION**-PM to speak to DWH regarding this item.

15. The date of the next Full Council meeting. Thursday 22nd January 2026. 7.30pm.

16. Dates of next meetings.

Planning Committee TBA

Finance Committee Tuesday 10th February. 6pm

Halls Committee-Tuesday 13th January 7pm-

Recreation and Lands Committee Thursday 15th January 10am.

Awards Committee TBA



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Title	District Councillors' Report
Authors	Cllrs Andrea Powell & Sue Cooper
Parish	Benson Parish Council
Date	16 th December 2025

New Chief Executive and Leader for SODC

At our last full Council meeting of 2025 on Thursday 11th December we elected a new Leader following the decision of Cllr. David Rouane, who has been leading the Council for the past 4 years, to step down. Council duly elected Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers as Leader until May 2027 when the next elections are due to be held. SODC has issued a press release with comprehensive information about Maggie and her new Cabinet, so we won't duplicate that information here. Suffice to say that we are very confident that Maggie will lead SODC with integrity, energy and compassion. Sue returns to the Cabinet to hold the Waste and Environment portfolio, an area with which she is extremely familiar!

Adrianna Partridge has now been appointed as the new Chief Executive of South and Vale Councils. She will officially take up this position from 1st January 2026. Adrianna is currently one of the Councils' Deputy Chief Executives and knows our councils well and has spent many months acting in her new position already so the transition should be seamless.

Local Government Reorganisation – final proposal now submitted

We're delighted to confirm that we have submitted our Local Government Reorganisation proposal for two unitary councils for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire to the government. We now play a waiting game.... In the meantime, the Cabinets at South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have supported the submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) to government for a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) in the Thames Valley region.

Councillor David Rouane, then Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, said: "Oxfordshire and Berkshire together make sense for a strategic authority. These areas share deep connections and complementary strengths that can underpin a successful partnership. Our priority is to ensure that any future arrangements reflect these natural ties and deliver real benefits for our communities."

Joint Local Plan News

The Joint Local Plan is at the examination stage, and some recent correspondence from our Joint Local Plan Inspectors provides welcome news.

Recently Planning Minister Matthew Pennycook issued a [ministerial statement](#) confirming that the Government is intending to remove the duty to co-operate as a requirement in the planning system through new planning regulations to be laid early in the new year. In a letter to the Planning Inspectorate, the Minister then asked Inspectors of plans currently at examination (like our JLP) to begin any necessary dialogue with councils in advance of the Regulations coming into effect.



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The JLP Inspectors have therefore written to us at South and Vale seeking our views on the implications and in particular how we wish to proceed. You can read the letter [here](#). We will be writing back soon and will publish the letter on the [JLP examination webpage](#).

Grants News

The **Councillor Grant** scheme closed on 5th December, and we now wait for the Community Enablement team to carry out all of their validity checks so we will be able to make decisions on how to allocate our funds. The overall scheme was oversubscribed by about three times, but we do not yet know how many applications were received for our ward.

A second round of funding (total £750k) has been approved for the **CIL Grant** Fund, for applications between £75k and £250k. This scheme will open for applications at the end of January and will be open for 8 weeks with a simplified application process.

The **Disabled Facilities Grant** provides up to £50,000 for essential adaptations such as ramps, stairlifts, level-access showers, heating or insulation improvements, and more. Disabled and vulnerable residents are encouraged to apply to this fund to make their homes safer and easier for them to live in.

Council Meeting on 11th December

At our meeting on 11th December we agreed the Council Tax base for 2026/27 as 64,095.8 Band D equivalent dwellings, a 0.7% over 2025/26. It was confirmed that this is probably an under-calculation due to backlogs at the VOA (the office that assigns Council Tax bands to new properties), but we are required to approve this figure now in order to enable council tax bills to be created.

Two motions were debated and agreed unanimously. The first asked Officers to investigate a specific support package for local hospitality businesses which are struggling at the moment and the second asked the Leader to write to Government to request clarity on how an emergency discharge at the proposed new reservoir near Abingdon (SESRO) would be managed (given its likely impact on communities in South Oxfordshire). All papers from this Council meeting and all other meetings can be found online as usual at <https://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

We hope that this will be the last meeting held at Didcot Civic Hall and that future meetings, from February 2026, will be held at Abbey House in Abingdon, thereby enabling live streaming to resume.

Council Annual Delivery Plan and Performance Dashboard

The Council's Annual Delivery plan

- Sets out the outputs/outcomes that will enable us to make progress in achieving the ambitions set out in the Council Plan.
- Articulates how we will implement the Council Plans and form the basis upon which we monitor progress.
- Sets out a range of key measures under each strategic objective which will be monitored and reported on at agreed intervals.



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- Identifies the specific programmes/projects/actions/activity that will enable progress to be made.

The Plan, along with the full version of the Council's Strategic Plan for 2025-29, is available for download as a single document or in chapters relating to each of the 5 strategic priority areas, can be found at <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/about-the-council/the-way-ahead-council-plan-2025-2029/annual-delivery-plan/>

This page also provides a link to the Performance dashboard with a whole host of information about how the Council is performing against its targets.

Christmas and New Year Closure

The Council offices will be closed from 5pm on Wednesday 24th December until 9.00am on Monday 5th January. Information about Council services over the holiday period can be found at <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/council-services-over-christmas-and-new-year-2025-26/>



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2 December 2025 (2025-2026)

Benson Parish Council

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

Bank Reconciliation at 30/11/2025		
Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		2,366,632.16
ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 30/11/2025		563,285.65
		2,929,917.81
SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 30/11/2025		345,088.40
A Cash in Hand 30/11/2025 (per Cash Book)		2,584,819.41
Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
1 Unity Trust Bank Current Account 30/11/2025	749,064.10	
2 Unity Trust CIL Account 30/11/2025	1,572,462.26	
7 Nationwide Business 90183594 30/11/2025	0.00	
5 Coop Public Sector Reserve 610 30/11/2025	12,637.26	
4 Coop 61006975 30/11/2025	124,943.00	
8 Natwest ex Bloomfield account - 30/11/2025	0.00	
Cheques Awaiting Banking 30/11/2025	0.00	
Stripe 30/11/2025	0.00	
3 Unity Trust Bloomfield Account 30/11/2025	56,146.86	
9 CCLA 30/11/2025	0.00	
6 Coop Current 61006959 30/11/2025	75,277.34	
		2,593,530.82
Less unrepresented payments		9,077.01
		2,584,453.81
Plus unrepresented receipts		365.60
B Adjusted Bank Balance		2,584,819.41
A = B Checks out OK		



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CARD								
552	04.11.2025	£250.00	£0.00	£250.00	remembrance wreath grant	Royal British Legion	CARD	
656	10.12.2025	£19.00	£3.80	£22.80	Image copyright	Shutterstock	CARD	
657	10.12.2025	£15.00	£3.00	£18.00	phones	Giff Gaff	CARD	
658	10.12.2025	£22.95	£4.59	£27.54	e reception services	E-Receptionist	CARD	
674	11.12.2025	£54.96	£10.99	£65.95	roller blinds	Argos Superstore	CARD	
675	11.12.2025	£222.53	£42.72	£265.25	toilet gel, brush, cables, air fresh, tr dispenser, cloths, loo roll,, prime, ladder tag	Amazon	CARD	
676	11.12.2025	£27.50	£5.50	£33.00	Legal docs	Law Depot	CARD	
677	11.12.2025	£272.50	£54.50	£327.00	stands and covers for speakers	Guitar Guitar	CARD	
678	11.12.2025	£2.71	£0.54	£3.25	plug	Benson Pharmacy	CARD	
679	11.12.2025	£281.87	£56.38	£338.25	xmas tree lights	Lighting and Illumination	CARD	
680	11.12.2025	£40.83	£8.17	£49.00	Land searches	LandRegistry	CARD	



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ONLINE								
577	17.11.2025	£4,477.62	£0.00	£4,477.62	PAYE Etc	HMRC Cumbernauld	ONLINE	already paid but paid £5044.58 for an unknown reason so payment below reduced
632	02.12.2025	£9,950.00	£1,990.00	£11,940.00	Barristers Fees re Orchard Appeal	Cornerstone Barristers	ONLINE	paid
638	09.12.2025	£650.00	£130.00	£780.00	Subs	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	ONLINE	
639	10.12.2025	£253.00	£0.00	£253.00	subs for RFO	SLCC	ONLINE	
640	10.12.2025	£64.23	£12.85	£77.08	white spirit, brushes, paint kettle	Colliers of Crowmarsh Ltd	ONLINE	
644	10.12.2025	£11,547.52	£0.00	£11,547.52	salaries	staff	ONLINE	
651	10.12.2025	£3,030.04	£0.00	£3,030.04	Pension	OCC Pension Fund	ONLINE	
652	10.12.2025	£3,993.27	£0.00	£3,993.27	PAYE Etc	HMRC Cumbernauld	ONLINE	actually pay £3425.89
653	10.12.2025	£577.50	£0.00	£577.50	cleaning	Clear View Window cleaning	ONLINE	
654	10.12.2025	£242.08	£48.42	£290.50	HR	Peninsula	ONLINE	
655	10.12.2025	£36.85	£7.37	£44.22	photocopier	Clarity Copiers Ltd	ONLINE	



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659	10.12.2025	£43.15	£8.63	£51.78	wifi ch	British Telecommunications plc	ONLINE	
664	10.12.2025	£148.11	£29.62	£177.73	waste removal	Grundon Waste Management Limited	ONLINE	
670	10.12.2025	£223.61	£44.72	£268.33	toilet rolls blue roll wash up liquid lemon cleaner gloves	Donovan Bros Ltd	ONLINE	
671	10.12.2025	£48.00	£9.60	£57.60	website management	Aqueous UK Ltd	ONLINE	
672	10.12.2025	£236.50	£47.30	£283.80	repairing door malfunction	Executive Alarms Ltd	ONLINE	
683	15.12.2025	£6.42	£1.28	£7.70	refreshments for councillor surgery	Gavin McLauchlan	ONLINE	need bank details
533	15.12.2025	£54.60	£0.00	£54.60	Refund for cancelled hall hire	Sue Amer	ONLINE	
528	15.12.2025	£307.70	£0.00	£307.70	refund double payment by Wantage band	Wantage Concert Brass Band	ONLINE	need bank details
684	16.12.2025	£85.00	£0.00	£85.00	Band at Xmas event	Roke & Benson Brass Band	ONLINE	



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Councillor William Pattison (Chair), Councillor Patricia Baylis (Vice Chair), Councillor Robert Castelow-Sturges, Councillor David Dawkins, Councillor Rob Jordan, Councillor Fiona Lovesey, Councillor Gavin McLauchlan, Councillor Roger Moore, Councillor Phillip Murray, Councillor Ian Skeels, Councillor Tom Stevenson, Councillor Michael Winton.